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Control: 13133
Rec'd: July 30, 1950
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FROM: Brussels

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TO: Secretary of State

NO: 145, July 30, 4 p.m.

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SENT DEPARTMENT 145, REPEATED INFORMATION LONDON 28, PARIS 39.

Spaak visited me Saturday evening and discussed at length current Belgian situation which he described as grave and dangerous. He was vigorously critical of rigid attitude of Prime Minister Duvieusart and the "do-nothing" policy of government at a critical moment when country, according to Spaak, is on brink of revolution and national disaster. Spaak said that next week would undoubtedly bring violence and bloodshed. If the government attempted action to suppress the march on Brussels of contingents of anti-Leopoldists from Wallonia, especially Liege, which may include as many as 100,000 demonstrators, he would not wish to prophesy consequences. He hinted at civil war and possibility of a split country.

Then he said he and his party associates could not understand why the US did not make gesture of disapproval of present state of affairs. He said everybody knew the British are opposed to Leopold (although British Embassy remains aloof), but that US neutrality or aloofness regarding the royal question is interpreted by some even as approval of Leopold's return and that individuals like Piuenne were spreading the word that the US favored Leopold.

Spaak then launched into a tirade against Leopold emphasizing that we would find King an obstacle to our policies. Spaak has now made literally hundreds of talks on this subject so that now he can, I believe, repeat the familiar phrases unconsciously.

I told Spaak that my government has loyally and consistently desired to remain aloof in this question having the most sympathetic respect for the national sensitivity of Belgians regarding an internal problem. Less than two weeks ago, I reminded Spaak, he had sat in same chair and expressed the unqualified opinion that for a period of three to four months after Leopold's return there would be relative calm in the country.

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country. Then, he had said, if Leopold did not retire there would be trouble. Last evening he acknowledged frankly that he had been mistaken. He explained what has already been reported that the lower echelons in the trades unions and in the parties had run away with the ball. They were now out of hand, he said, and anything might happen.

Spaak felt that the collapse (effondrement) of Belgium would be of direct concern to US in view of the international situation. I inquired whether he was suggesting US intervention. He replied in the negative but he thought US should indicate in some way its disapproval of the disintegrating situation. He admitted that even if this were done it would be too late to prevent the violent demonstrations he expects early in the week.

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I informed Spaak that we were disappointed over the failure of his party to support the Belgian Government's declaration on Korea although we had no doubt regarding his personal sentiment. He blamed it on Van Zeeland saying latter is most disliked man in Belgium and fact that Van Zeeland made the declaration to the joint houses chilled the Socialist group. Spaak acknowledged that while Max Buset is Social Party boss, Spaak still controls substantially party attitude on foreign affairs. In Korean matter, however, the party would go no further than to abstain. Spaak could not persuade party bureau to give affirmatively support Van Zeeland's declaration which Spaak personally found excellent.

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It would seem to me highly inadvisable at this moment for USG to make any demarche regarding an issue which has divided Belgium. I assured Spaak of our hope that his skill would contribute to a happy solution which would enable Belgium to play her part in the European group. I believe that Spaak's present gloomy forebodings may perhaps be discounted in part as coming from a politician who

has been

has been unhappy since he lost power last year. As a result of inflammatory speeches and actions over a period of months, and with his personal future bound up in this issue, Spaak is obviously in a high state of tension with flashes of the demagogue. He was wrong in his prediction some days ago and he may possibly be wrong in his present estimate of disaster ahead.

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MURPHY

JRM:EFC